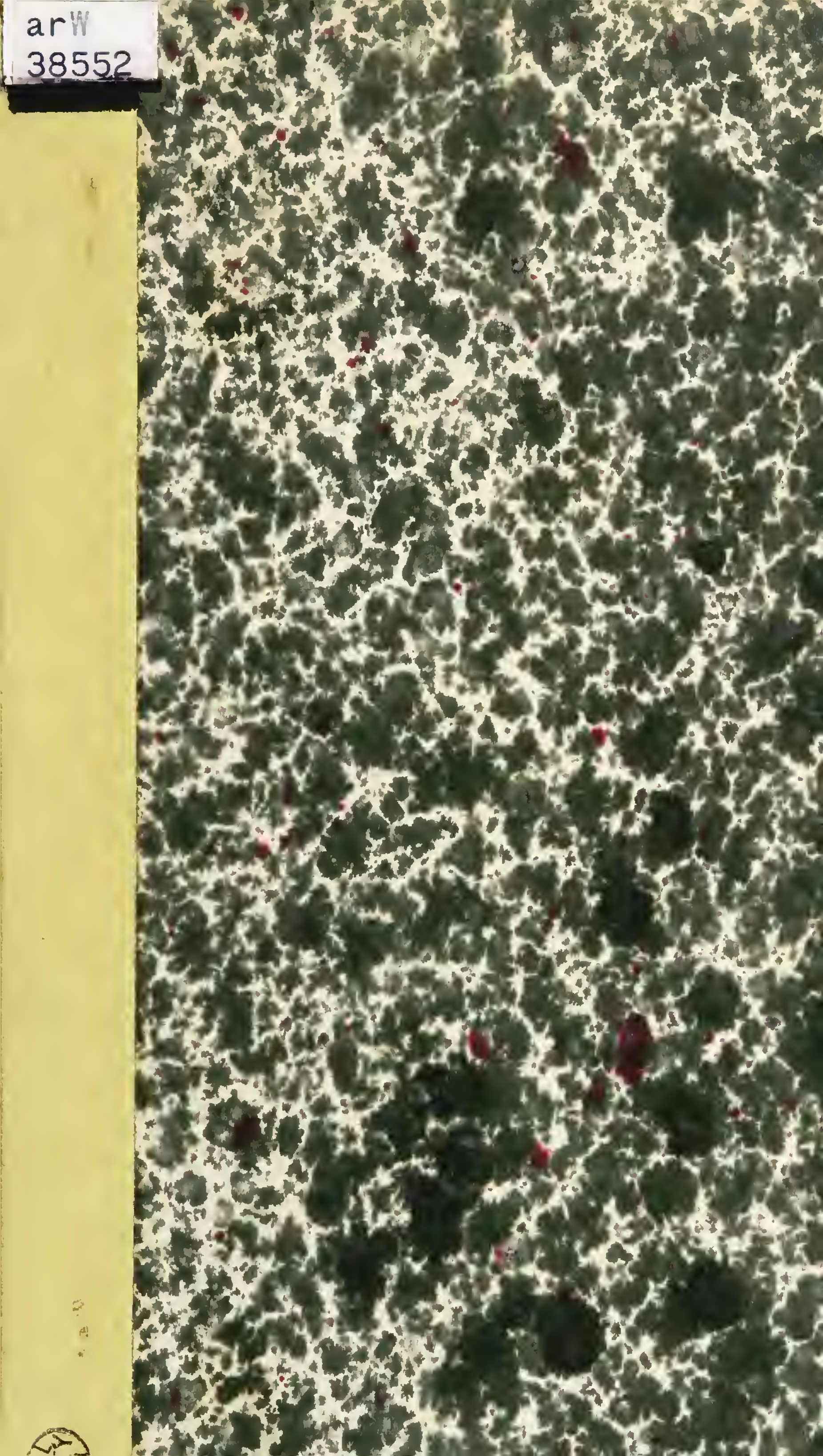
arW
38552



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924031775012

THE FAMILY

OF

MRS. LOUISE E. BETTENS

BORN ROCHAT

AND OF

ALEXANDER BETTENS

NEW YORK, February 27 1918

DR. CHARLES W. ELIOT
Cambridge
Massachusetts

DEAR MR. ELIOT

To obtain some information of the Rochat who settled in Virginia about the year 1800, or prior thereto, a pamphlet has been printed to be sent to some of my Rochat relatives, and to others. A copy is enclosed. A few corrections in, and additions to, the letter dated February 7 1918 written by me to you, have been made in the copy of that letter as printed.

Sincerely

EDWARD D. BETTENS

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
5 February 1918.

DEAR MR. BETTENS:

I thank you for another very beautiful book* in commemoration of your mother. It is an interesting collection of characteristic letters put into printed form in a manner which is likely to preserve them for the benefit of future generations.

The name Rochat suggests a French strain in your family. To what race or stock did Alexander Bettens belong? In our country it is always interesting to know the family or racial stock of remarkable persons, particularly in cases of apparent admixture of different stocks.

I am, with many thanks,

Sincerely yours

CHARLES W. ELIOT

EDWARD D. BETTENS, Esq.

---

*The book "Louise E. Bettens", published in 1918 for private distribution.

New York, February 7, 1918.

Dr. Charles W. Eliot,
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Mr. Eliot:

Your letter of 5th instant received.

THE ROCHATS

My mother's grandfather Rochat (perhaps it was her great grandfather) came from Paris, France about 100 or more years ago and settled in Virginia. His wife Ernestine Guineaud was born in the Pays de Vaud, Switzerland. Their son Jacob Rochat (or was it their grandson?) settled on a farm near Ghent, Kentucky and married Nancy Furness. Nancy Furness was born in Kentucky, but her parents came from Northumberland, England, and, at first, settled in Virginia. One of the children of Jacob and Nancy Furness Rochat was Louise Emeline Rochat, my mother, born January 7, 1827, on her father's farm, near Ghent, Kentucky. She died in New York City March 23, 1914.

THE BETTENS

In the year 1801 my grandfather, Philip Bettens, came to this country from the Canton de Berne, Switzerland and settled on a farm in Vevay, Indiana. I do not know the family name or nationality of his wife Rose. One of their children was Alexander Bettens, born April 10th, 1811, in Vevay, Indiana, where he died August 11, 1870. Louise E. Rochat and Alexander Bettens intermarried, in Vevay, January 31, 1843. Their children, all born in Vevay, were as follows:

FRANK. BORN JANUARY 14. 1844
DIED IN CINCINNATI, OHIO, MARCH 10, 1864

ROSE, BORN MAY 10, 1846
DIED IN VEVAY, JUNE 28, 1849

THOMAS SIMMS, BORN MARCH 6, 1851
DIED IN BAR HARBOR, MAINE, JULY 2, 1907

EDWARD DETRAZ (MYSELF) BORN APRIL 11, 1848.

VEVAY, INDIANA

Vevay, Indiana was named after Vevai, Switzerland. In the year 1801 seven Swiss families (one of them Philip Bettens and his family) came together from Switzerland and settled in Vevay, Indiana, where they began the cultivation of grapes.

When I was about seven years old I left Vevay and have never revisited it.

Edward Eggleston, the author of the "Hoosier Schoolmaster," and his brother George, an editorial writer on New York papers, as boys lived in Vevay, Indiana, when Louise E. Rochat was a girl there.

Some years ago George Eggleston visited Vevay, Indiana and wrote a description of it. That description is in a quarto volume of inlaid letters and illustrations, entitled "Louise E. Bettens", now on deposit, with other books, in a case in the Treasure Room of the Widener Library, Harvard College. A single star on the back of this volume is its distinguishing mark, but that volume can be considered as the Family Book as it contains some family incidents.

Another quarto volume of inlaid letters and illustrations, in that case, entitled "Louise E. Bettens", marked on its back with two stars, can be called the Pupils Book, as it contains letters from pupils of my brother Thomas Simms Bettens.

A third quarto volume of inlaid letters and illustrations, in that case, entitled "Louise E. Bettens", marked on its back with three stars, can be called the Harvard Book, as it contains letters from Harvard men, and Harvard memorabilia.

A fourth quarto volume of inlaid letters and illustrations, in that case, entitled "Louise E. Bettens", has no star on its back. It contains copies of letters to intimate friends written during my mother's last sickness.

There is a fifth quarto volume of inlaid letters and illustrations, entitled "Louise E. Bettens", bound in full red crushed levant, tooled, with doublure and silk fly leaves. It contains some incidents of my mother's life. That fifth volume is in a case, in the Louise E. Bettens Room in the Phillips Brooks House, Harvard College.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
8 February 1918.

DEAR MR. BETTENS:

Your letter of February 7th giving me the details about the nationality of your forebears interests me very much. The French strain in you is strong. Could you not add to the statement you have already made about your mother's origin whatever information you have concerning the religion of her French ancestors? Were they Catholics or Protestants?

I should think that you would feel a strong inclination to see with your own eyes Vevay, Indiana, the town you left at the age of seven and have never revisited. I should think it would be interesting to get a good photograph of the house in which your father and mother lived in that town. Would it not be possible also for you to ascertain where the Rochats settled in Virginia, and what kind of a life they lived there? These several inquiries might show whether your mother was a eugenic product or a "sport" in the natural history sense. You know there is great interest now—an interest likely to increase in the future—in all questions of this nature. See the present talk about Lincoln in connection with the Barnard statue of him.

Sincerely yours,
CHARLES W. ELIOT.

EDWARD D. BETTENS, Esq.

New York, February 9th, 1918.

Dr. Charles W. Eliot,
Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Dear Mr. Eliot:

The little information that I have as to my ancestors came to me from my Mother in Bar Harbor a few years before she died. I asked for it, because on the death of both of us, the Executor of the will of the survivor would need it. But this was for information as to heirs and next of kin.

Since her death I have had some correspondence with cousins, on my mother's side, and also on my father's side, with the same object in view.

I am now considering seeking for such information as your letter calls for.

Neither my Mother nor my Brother Thomas, nor I, lived in the past.

During the whole of my life, from childhood, it was the present and the future that was always before me, and I believe always before my mother and brother. I do not recall of ever being curious, as to my ancestors, until recently.

The house in which I was born, long ago gave way to another house.

The weeping willow tree at the gate on the road skirting the Ohio river, the vineyard stretching from the road back on the farm, the five tall pecan trees on the side of the house, and the orchards reaching back to the hill, may or may not be there now. Perhaps that homestead should remain my Yarrow Unvisited.

Sincerely,

Edward D. Bettens.

During the war of 1812, the English army invaded Virginia, and destroyed most of the official Virginia records. This makes it difficult to get information, from the official records of Virginia, of the Rochat, from France, and the Furness, from England, who settled in Virginia, prior to 1812.

NEW YORK, February 13, 1918

DR. CHARLES W. ELIOT,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

DEAR MR. ELIOT:

About 1908 I read, in the New York *World*, a description of Vevay, Indiana, by Mr. George Cary Eggleston. As it may interest you, I enclose a copy.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

VEVAY
INDIANA

I have made a discovery, I have found and studied the very prettiest, happiest, and in its unambitious way, the most prosperous small town I ever saw. I have seen there an almost ideal object lesson in the municipal ownership of public utilities.

The town is Vevay, Indiana. It lies on the Ohio River, about midway between Cincinnati and Louisville. I was born there and I have been revisiting the town after an absence of forty-five years.

The county of which Vevay is the seat has not one foot of railroad within its borders. The town has no factories. And yet its people, less than three thousand in number, are enviably well to do. They have two banks and three prosperous weekly newspapers. Their homes are all comfortable, and many of them luxurious. They have a court house that would do credit, in its architecture and its proportions, to a town twenty times the size of Vevay.

Their main thoroughfare, leading down to the river, and the broad wharf or levee, at its foot, are well paved with stone. All their other streets are macadamized after the best modern methods, and are kept in perfect order. So are all the main country roads that lead out from the town into the rich and highly cultivated farming regions round about.

In all the residence streets there are perfectly laid and perfectly kept sidewalks of artificial stone. Everywhere the sidewalks are free even from dust, and the streets clean enough to satisfy the demands of a Waring. They are boarded on either side with stately sycamores, tall elms and broadly-spreading maples all zealously cared for by the municipal authorities. In addition there is an adequate water-system supplying water in lavish abundance for all uses. There is a telephone system with astonishingly cheap rentals—so cheap that almost every house of consequence has an instrument in it. And there are long distance connections to Cincinnati, Louisville and Indianapolis, and all towns between, at rates of charges that would seem impossibly low to New York. * * * Still further, there is an electric light plant which furnishes light so cheaply that no Gas Company can exist in the town. The municipal tax rate of a people who enjoy all these benefits * * * is only one per cent, and the growing profits of the municipality from the telephone and electric light plants promise, within a year or two, to reduce even that tax by one-half.

All this is the result of the municipal ownership of public utilities, under the vigilant scrutiny of an alert public opinion, acting in perfect harmony for the public good. * * * There is no such thing as pauperism in this well ordered Community. * * * The town is very slightly more populous now than it was when I knew it, half a century ago. But it has enjoyed the immeasurably better growth in beauty, comfort and social enjoyment. Now, as then, the sole business of Vevay's people is to exchange the goods that prosperous farmers need, for the products they dig out of the soil, and to send the latter to larger markets for sale. But there was little of beauty in Vevay then, little comfort and some rather squalid poverty. * * *

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON.

NEW YORK, February 10, 1918.

DR. CHARLES M. GREEN,
78 Marlborough Street,
Boston, Mass.

DEAR DOCTOR:

Your affectionate letter of 8th inst. moves me greatly. Tonight W. S. Beaman H. '72 and S. B. Clarke H '74 dine with me. It is my intention to read to them your letter, and to discuss with them two letters, received by me last week, from Dr. Charles W. Eliot.

Dr. Eliot is deeply interested in the ancestors of my Mother—the Rochats. Your letter touches on the "life eternal". Dr. Eliot and you arouse my thoughts.

My life has been in this world (and particularly the world around me). As an infant and a very young child, food, comfort and affection, probably satisfied me. As I grew older, and my mind developed, I, to some extent, took an interest in others, and had some concern for them.

Soon it began to dawn on me that this life meant effort on my part, a struggle with and against others. I learned to love work, whatever it was, whether at home, in the school, in games, or out in the world earning some money. This love for work, for its own sake, and because the object in view, was to help my Mother, made my mind—not exactly a blank—but unconcerned about my ancestors and about the "life eternal." But Dr. Eliot's letters have aroused my curiosity as to who was the Rochat who came from Paris, France about the year 1800 and settled in Virginia, and whose son (or grandson) was Jacob, the father of my mother.

So your letter takes me back, not to the time of the French Revolution, but to the entrance to the World of Spirits, and there I stand with head bowed and silent.

Very sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

NEW YORK, February 25, 1918.

MISS ELEANOR C. O'CONNELL,
Woodward High School,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

DEAR MISS O'CONNELL:

Your letter of 23rd inst. gives me unalloyed pleasure, for you are using the books,* given by me to Woodward High School, as I want them to be used. The character of my mother and brother should be brought to the attention of the pupils, and the pupils, at the same time, can learn something of the art of bookmaking in the United States.

A few years ago, a gentleman connected with the publishers, Charles Scribners' Sons, lectured, in different cities in this country, on books and book making. He carried with him the book Thomas Simms Bettens, a copy of which is in the Graduates Room of Woodward High School, and used it, in his lectures, as a fine example of the art of book making in this country.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

---

*The books
Thomas Simms Bettens
Mrs. Louise E. Bettens
Louise E. Bettens

OLD SOUTH PARSONAGE
BOYLSTON ST., BOSTON

February
nineteenth
1918

DEAR MR. BETTENS:—

*Your touching and beautiful memorial volume to your mother interests me deeply. Surely she was worthy of this high praise and noble commemoration.

Your volume is an expression of true piety, in the old Roman sense of the word, and your desire to extend the precious influence of your mother in this world is not only a happiness to you, but a blessing to us all.

All that taste and skill and reverend, grateful memory could do they have done in this exalted and lovely tribute to your mother.

With grateful regard and true respect,

Very truly yours,

GEORGE A. GORDON.†

EDWARD D. BETTENS, Esq.
130 West 87th St.
New York City

---

*The book Louise E. Bettens.
†President of the Harvard Alumni Association.

Cornell University Library
arW38552

The family of Mrs. Louise E. Bettens, bo

3 1924 031 775 012
olin,anx